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DE RUEHLO #1669/01 2011534
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P 201534Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2909
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/C

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/20/2019
TAGS: PREL PAID MASS ZF CG RW UG SO UK

SUBJECT: DRC/LRA: UK SEES ARMY REFORM AS KEY TO SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IMPROVEMENT, LOOKING FORWARD TO CONTACT GROUP MEETING

REF: EMAILS LORD-AF/C

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Daniel McNicholas, reasons 1. 4 (b/d).

¶11. (C) Summary. The UK sees security sector reform (SSR) and army reform as keys to improving sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Foreign Office Great Lakes team leader Nne-Nne Iwuji-Eme and DRC Desk Officer Oliver Craven told Poloff July 20. The UK would like to focus on SSR at the October Contact Group meeting. Priority army reform issues from the UK's perspective are garrisoning the army, feeding the soldiers, establishing an efficient salaries payment chain, professionalizing training programs, and implementing proper entrance vetting procedures. Additional issues to discuss in the run-up to the Contact Group meeting are funding for the 2010 local elections and China and Angola's participation in the October meeting. On regional stability, Uganda Desk Officer Michelle Webster noted that the military-only track to deal with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) meant that Uganda's military presence in the area was extremely important and questioned what Uganda's AMISOM plus-up would mean for security in Eastern DRC, if it resulted in a reduction in Uganda troops in the area. End summary.

¶12. (C) Highlighting that the UK's focus on security sector reform (SSR) and asserting army reform are the keys to improvements in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in DRC, Foreign Office Great Lakes team leader Nne-Nne Iwuji-Eme and DRC Desk Officer Oliver Craven told Poloff July 20 that the UK would like to focus on SSR at the October Contact Group meeting. Given that the military is a major source of SGBV, she said army reform and reintegration of armed groups into the DRC army would be the best way to improvement SGBV problems. Iwuji-Eme said agreeing SSR priorities and establishing lines of operation for interested donors could be a fruitful discussion for the Contact Group, especially as a meaningful improvement in the army's operation would reduce its usurping of local communities. The UK's SSR priorities include garrisoning the army, feeding the soldiers, establishing an efficient salaries payment chain, professionalizing training programs, and implementing proper entrance vetting procedures. Acknowledging the "structural and systematic salary payment issues," Iwuji-Eme said the European Commission is deploying a mission to research the salaries payment chain and make recommendations for improvement. She suggested that the UK might be in a position to produce a non-paper on army reform for discussion at the Contact Group meeting.

¶2. (C) Addressing other possible Contact Group meeting topics, Iwuji-Eme said funding for the 2010 local elections is an issue and suggested that the meeting might be a good opportunity to put pressure on members of the international community to fulfill their pledges to support the elections, which would remove the Government of DRC's excuses about the international community's lack of support - "a way to call their bluff." She highlighted good conduct of the local elections as an important conflict prevention mechanism for the presidential elections the following year. She also suggested the international community might consider holding a donor/pledging conference as a way to improve coordination on DRC support, especially as related to SSR. On Contact Group meeting attendance, she indicated that it might be beneficial to ask Angola and China to attend, as they are both big players in the DRC, and there still remains a window of opportunity to productively engage China on the DRC. EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Roeland van de Geer had been quietly investigating China and Angola's participation, she said without knowing how far that had progressed.

Uganda/LRA

¶3. (C) Discussing regional stability more generally, Uganda Desk Officer Michelle Webster raised Uganda's recent announcement that the Ugandan military would be sending additional battalions to support AMISOM in Somalia. She questioned where those troops would come from and what the impact on regional security would be if the Ugandan military left the DRC and Northern Uganda completely. She noted that the military-only track to deal with the Lord's Resistance

Army (LRA) meant that Uganda's military presence in the area was extremely important, especially given the upcoming elections in Sudan and other potentially destabilizing regional events.

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